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ABSTRACT

Although not a new concept, mentoring is being seen as an increasingly important part of an individual's career and work force development, requiring sophisticated skills of those who provide it. Mentoring has been defined as "a relationship in which a more experienced person facilitates the broad development of a less experienced person on a regular basis and over an extended period of time." It is directed to intellectual, personal, and social maturation as well as occupational development. Most mentoring is offered within school settings. It occurs in formal classroom settings, through work experience and apprenticeship programs, and through company- and community-sponsored programs. Recognizing the complexity of successful mentoring, educators are focusing on establishment of performance standards for mentoring services in career development. The quality of mentoring in school settings will depend on staff members' ability to incorporate career development concepts and activities into the curriculum and to consult with and use employers, community groups, and the general public to support the schools' career development process. Youth mentoring programs in the workplace are becoming increasingly prevalent, especially for noncollege-bound youth. A mentoring initiative implemented by the Association for Women in Science was found to be most helpful to the students in the areas of self-image and self-confidence, networking and professional contacts, career opportunities and options, letters of reference, and balancing family and work. With national education efforts focused on effective school-to-work transitions, it is likely that the use of mentoring will continue to grow, expand in focus, and improve in quality. (Contains an annotated list of 13 print resources and 3 resource organizations.) (KC)

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The Role of Mentoring in Career Education
Myths and Realities

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TRENDS AND ISSUES ALERTS

by Bettina A. Lankard 1996

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS - 1966-1996

The Role of Mentoring in Career Education

Mentoring is not a new concept. Over the years it has been provided, in some form or other, by teachers, counselors, parents, friends, siblings, and other family members to initiate and reinforce learning in school, work, family, and community settings. In most cases, the mentoring was informal and was often provided by individuals who were inadequately prepared to serve in that capacity. Today, as social, family, and work cultures change and competition in the workplace increases, mentoring is seen as an important part of an individual's career and work force development, requiring sophisticated skills of those who provide it. This *Trends and Issues Alert* provides an overview of mentoring, who is providing it, how it is provided, and what effects it is having on students' career development.

Most mentoring is offered within the school setting. It occurs in formal classroom settings, through work experience and apprenticeship programs, and through company- and community-sponsored programs. The restructuring of schools has spearheaded a renewed interest in mentoring as a technique for ensuring the focus on the learner and quality of learning. Bagley et al. (1994), in describing their "shared-ownership" technology model for restructuring the classroom, promote use of mentoring (reflective classroom management) in combination with cooperative learning, project-based learning, computer use, authentic assessment, and student empowerment.

The distinction between mentoring and other forms of counseling/support is that "mentoring is a relationship in which a more experienced person facilitates the broad development of a less experienced person on a regular basis and over an extended period of time" (U.S. Congress 1995, p. 22). It is directed to intellectual, personal, and social maturation as well as occupational development. Recognizing the complexity of successful mentoring, educators are focusing on establishment of performance standards for mentoring services in career development. The quality of mentoring in school settings will depend on staff members' ability to incorporate career development concepts and activities into the curriculum and to consult with and use employers, community groups, and the general public to support the schools' career development process (Flaxman 1993).

Youth mentoring programs in the workplace are becoming increasingly prevalent. The newer wave of workplace mentoring involves exposing noncollege-bound youth to career options, academic counseling/tutoring, and emotional support (Freedman and Baker 1995). Youth apprenticeship programs offer excellent opportunities to capitalize on mentoring toward these outcomes. Finley and Scott (1995) describe a model that distinguishes among forms of career development assistance provided by the education system and the employer at the worksite (p. 219):

- Coaches develop the competencies of the apprentices.
- Mentors counsel the apprentice about career directions and life goals and initiate him or her into the norms of the workplace and its culture.
- Guidance counselors arrange apprentices' school schedules for released time and advise apprentices, their parents, and their teachers.

The comprehensive mentoring that is required for career development is reflected in the evaluation results from a mentoring program implemented by the Association for Women in Science. The support students found most helpful was in the areas of self-image and self-confidence, networking and professional contacts, career opportunities and options, letters of reference, and balancing family and work. With national education efforts focused on effective school-to-work transitions, it is likely that the use of mentoring will continue to grow, expand in focus, and improve in quality.

Print Resources

Bagley, C. A. et al. "The Shared-Ownership Technology Model: Restructuring the Classroom." Position paper, 1994. (ED 387 082)

The shared-ownership technology model is actually a combination of six classroom strategies: (1) cooperative learning; (2) reflective approach to classroom management; (3) project-based approach to learning; (4) the use of computers with other technology as learning tools in the classroom; (5) authentic assessment; and (6) an emphasis on student empowerment.

Bizzari, J. C. "Women: Role Models, Mentors, and Careers." *Educational Horizons* 73, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 145-152.

Evidence suggests potential can be denied or lost for women in certain male-dominated careers for lack of women mentors or role models in the field. Seeing other women in challenging roles becomes necessary to many young women who need a light on the horizon to see how something can be done.

Didion, C. J. "Mentoring Women in Science." *Educational Horizons* 73, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 141-144.

The Association for Women in Science (AWIS) implements an undergraduate and graduate mentoring program through its 64 chapters, involving an estimated 6,000 students and 2,500 mentors. In an interim evaluation, 77% of the students responding reported they perceived barriers for women entering and staying in science; 62% reported the AWIS project helped with these barriers.

Finley, A., and Scott, D., comps. *Work-Based Learning Resource Guide*. Tallahassee: Florida State University, August 1995. (ED 388 849)

A core component of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, work-based learning refers to programs that provide students with exposure to or actual experiences in workplaces. Typical work-based learning programs include youth apprenticeship,

internship, job shadowing, cooperative education, and mentoring.

Flaxman, E. ***Standards for Mentoring in Career Development. IEE Brief Number 10.*** New York: Institute on Education and the Economy, 1993. (ED 366 820)

Program planners considering developing mentoring programs must first consider mentoring's place in the development of career identification/choice and must establish performance standards for mentoring services in career development. Mentoring can occur in formal classroom instruction, work experiences, special programs, and/or special services.

Floyd, N., ed. ***Mentoring. Education Research Consumer Guide, Number 7.*** Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 1993. (ED 363 678)

Addresses the issue of mentoring, what it is, how it works, and why it is needed; and provides some examples of current mentoring programs.

Freedman, M. and Baker, R. ***Workplace Mentoring for Youth: Context, Issues, Strategies....Education Reform and School-to-Work Transition Series.*** Washington, DC: National Institute for Work and Learning, 1995. (ED 381 670)

The newer wave of workplace mentoring involves exposing noncollege-bound youth to career options, academic counseling/tutoring, and emotional support; workplace mentoring also takes place in youth apprenticeship programs. Two of the biggest issues facing formal mentoring programs are social distance and time constraints. Best practices include acknowledging mentoring as an art, training mentors continuously, orienting students to the concept, allowing enough time, and supporting mentors and protégés once a match has been formed.

Greer, R. ***Mentor's Guide to Improved Equity in Decision Making: Roles, Methods, and Influences.*** Columbus, OH: Career, Education, and Training Associates, Inc., 1993. (ED 358 383)

Guide to establishing a program in which adults from the community serve as mentors for high school students to accomplish the following goals: improve student career understanding and literacy, show students real relationships between learning and earning a living, acquaint students with career opportunities in a broadening context, and help students make informed curricular and career choices.

Locklear, E. L. ***CareerSmarts. 4-H Mentoring Program.*** Raleigh: Cooperative Extension Service, North Carolina State University, 1991. (ED 358 334)

Contains three handbooks (for extension agents, protégés, and mentors) that explain the program and outline practical ways to conduct it.

Maddy-Bernstein, C., comp. ***A School-to Work Resource Guide: Focusing on Diversity.*** Berkeley: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California, 1995. (ED 389 901)

Includes an annotated list of publications on mentoring and dropout prevention.

McAuliffe, A., ed. ***Mentoring in Educational Settings. WEEA Digest.*** Newton, MA: Women's Educational Equity Act Dissemination Center, 1993. (ED 359 434)

Includes "Mentoring in Educational Settings: Unresolved Issues and Unanswered Questions" and "Learning from the Field: Mentoring Projects in Field-based Settings."

U.S. Congress. ***Learning to Work: Making the Transition from School to Work.*** Washington, DC: Office of Technology Assessment, 1995. (ED 387 594)

Chapter 3 describes and analyzes the apparent advantages and disadvantages of five learning processes that can be used in work settings: experiential learning, work-group learning, mentoring, workplace instruction, and technology-assisted learning.

Wickwire, P. N., ed. ***Career Education that Works: Programs, Practices, and Publications.*** Hermosa Beach, CA: American Association for Career Education, 1995. (ED 383 929)

Describes winners of the American Association for Career Education Citations for Career Education Initiatives from 1992-1995, including Mentoring: A Career Development Activity for Junior High Students.

Resource Organizations

Girls, Inc., 30 East 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016 (212/689-3700; fax: 212/683-1253).

Programs include Operation SMART (Science, Math, and Relevant Technology), which seeks to encourage girls' participation in these fields.

International Mentoring Association, Western Michigan University, Office of Conferences and Institutes, Kalamazoo, MI 49008 (616/387-4174; fax: 616/387-4189; e-mail: oedu_ima@wmich.edu; World Wide Web: http://www.indiana.edu/~rugsdev/ima.html)

A worldwide network of individuals who have established successful mentoring practices and willingly share their success. Members include K-12 mentoring program coordinators.

Norwalk Mentor Program, Norwalk Public Schools, 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06852-6001 (203/854-4011; fax: 203/854-4005)

More than 800 local employers and community agencies are paired with potential dropouts and mentor them from kindergarten through graduation from high school. The program has been replicated nationally.

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